

*do not cut down too much
Prof Norton
even then*

THE
SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

VOL. VI.] JANUARY 15, 1836. [NO. I.

CONTENTS.

A Dissertation, to show that the Last Supper which Jesus partook with his twelve Disciples, was not the Passover -	1
Why did the Jews reject Jesus - - - -	18
The Epistle to the Thessalonians - - - -	33
A Discourse on Prophecy as an Evidence of Christianity.— By Charles W. Upham. Junior Pastor of the First Church in Salem, Mass. 8vo. pp. 72. Salem. 1835 - - -	40
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xvii. 14—27 - - -	44

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PROSPECTUS OF THE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

NEW SERIES.

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The present number commences a new volume of this Periodical. The purpose of the work and the character of its contents will be the same as heretofore. There will be no connexion with this and the preceding volumes except that the Translations and Expositions will be continued in regular order.

The object of this Publication will be to afford to Sunday School Teachers and Parents, and also to other Christians, facilities towards a right understanding and use of the Bible, and particularly of the New Testament. It will contain translations of different passages and of whole books of the New Testament, with expositions and such critical and practical remarks as may be thought useful. It will also offer to the reader short essays on the nature of the scriptural writings, their literary character, critical peculiarities, historical, biographical, and ecclesiastical uses and value. The work is not designed to be controversial nor deeply critical. Notices of valuable books upon biblical literature, and translations and extracts from the works of eminent writers will occasionally form a part of the contents.

It will continue to be edited by some of the members of the Theological School in Cambridge, assisted by the contributions of several distinguished clergymen. Every exertion will be used to secure an interest to the work, and likewise to provide for its regular and punctual publication.

A large addition to the subscription list is still necessary to defray the cost of the publication, and it is hoped that those who approve of the plan will lend their assistance. Clergymen and others are respectfully requested to endeavor as far as their convenience will permit to increase its circulation.

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THE

SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

VOLUME VI

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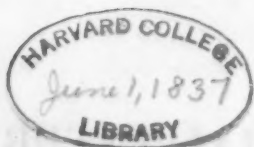
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CONTENTS.

A Dissertation, to show that the Last Supper which Jesus partook with his twelve Disciples, was not the Passover, -	1
Why did the Jews reject Jesus? - - - - -	13
The Epistle to the Thessalonians, - - - - -	33
A Discourse on Prophecy as an Evidence of Christianity.—	
By Charles W. Upham, Junior Pastor of the First Church in Salem, Mass. 8vo. pp. 22. Salem. 1835, - -	40
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xvii. 14—27, - -	44
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xviii. 1—20, - -	49
Meaning of the word Angel in the New Testament, - -	58
Introduction to the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, -	64
The Song of Deborah and Barak, - - - - -	67
Exposition of 1 Peter iii. 17—20, - - - - -	77
The Temptation of Jesus, - - - - -	80
General Considerations upon Hebrew Literature, -	85
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xviii. 21—35, -	97
The Epistle to the Galatians, - - - - -	101
Meaning of the word Angel in the Old Testament, -	111
Balaam and his Ass, - - - - -	120
Of the Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch, by Philip, -	130
How far can the authors of the Old Testament be called Prophets, - - - - -	133
The first principle of Interpretation, - - - - -	137
Translation from J. E. Cellerier's Introduction to the Old Testament, - - - - -	145
Introduction to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, -	160

Remarks upon John iv. 13, 14, and vi. 35, - -	170
Translation and Exposition of Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12, - -	174
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xix. 1—15, - -	190
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xix. 16—29, - -	192
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xix. 30—xx. 16, - -	198
Remarks upon several passages in Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12,	203
Introduction to the First Epistle to the Corinthians,	209
Conjectures upon the Original Memoirs which Moses,	
made use of to compose the Book of Genesis, - -	218
How ought the Bible to be read? - - - -	226
On the Gift of Tongues, - - - - -	235
Translation and Exposition.—Matt. xx. 17—34, - -	241
Jephthah's Vow.—Judges xi. - - - - -	248
Hug's Introduction to the New Testament, - -	261
On the Gift of Tongues, <i>continued</i> - - - -	274
On the Beauties of the Old Testament, - - -	280
Translation from J. E. Cellerier's Introduction to the	
Old Testament, - - - - -	283

THE
SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

A DISSERTATION, TO SHOW THAT THE LAST SUPPER
WHICH JESUS PARTOOK WITH HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES,
WAS NOT THE PASSOVER.

That *the last supper* which Jesus partook with his disciples was really *the Paschal feast*, and at the same time with the rest of the Jews, appears to be taken for granted by most of the Commentators that I have consulted; some few only understand it as an anticipation of that festival by one day. Having myself been led to believe, that our Lord could not celebrate the national Passover, but was crucified on the day in which the Paschal lamb was killed, and entombed before the evening commenced in which it was eaten, I proceed to state the reasons for my opinion.

It will be necessary, first, to inquire into the design of the Jewish Passover, and to describe some things relating to 'the custom of the Feast.'

I. The PASSOVER was a national festival, of annual observance, instituted to preserve among the Hebrews the remembrance of their liberation from Egyptian

bondage. The name was given it because, on the night before their departure, the angel, commissioned to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, on the door-posts, or lintels, of which the blood of a lamb had been sprinkled.—It lasted from the fourteenth to the end of the twenty-first of the month, then called Abib, but afterwards Nisan, (answering to our April,) ordained, thereafter, to be the first month in their sacred, or ecclesiastical year.* During the whole of these seven days the people ate unleavened bread; and, for this reason, the festival was sometimes called ‘the feast of unleavened bread.’†

The fourteenth of the month was ‘the day of preparation.’ The first part of which was taken up in removing all leavened bread from their houses, and in making every thing ready for the celebration of the feast. Towards the latter part of the day, a lamb was killed. At the original institution, the direction was that this should be done ‘between the evenings’;‡ that is, between the evening with which the day commenced, and that at which it closed. From the Babylonian Talmud and Maimonides, we learn that the time for killing the lamb was assigned to that of the daily sacrifice; that is, about the middle of the afternoon. And we know from Josephus,|| and other Jewish writers, that this was the time of day on which the killing commenced.

* Exodus xii. 1—28; xxiii. 15; Leviticus xxiii. 4—8; Numbers xxviii. 16—25; Deuteronomy xvi. 1—8.

† Exodus xii. 18; xiii. 6, 7; xxiii. 15; Leviticus xxiii. 6; Numbers xxviii. 17.

‡ Exodus xii. 6. By our translators rendered ‘in the evening.’

|| Antiq. lib. ii. cap. 14, § 6.

Here it is to be noted that *the Jews began their day at sunset.** The not considering this, has led common readers of the sacred writings, and even Commentators, into perplexity in the designation of time; and occasioned the chief embarrassment which has arisen respecting the PASSOVER at the close of our Lord's ministry. But, *by duly attending to this particular way of reckoning, the difficulties may be entirely removed, and the seeming discrepancies between the account given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and that of John, may be satisfactorily reconciled.* When we, moderns, say 'Thursday evening,' we mean *the evening which succeeds to the afternoon of Thursday;* but, as the Jews reckoned, it was the evening which *preceded*, (or was anterior to) the morning of the day. This fourteenth day of Abib, therefore, *began on the evening of that, which, in our way of reckoning, is called the thirteenth.*

The lamb was to be killed and flayed by a Priest,† and the blood sprinkled on the altar. Then the owner of the lamb took it and carried it to his house, where it was roasted on the former part of the ensuing evening, which was the beginning of the fifteenth day. It was served up with a sallad of wild and bitter herbs; and eaten with unleavened bread. Each family partook by itself; but, if the number of the household was not sufficient for the consumption of the whole, others might be associated.

The repast was partaken by the members of the family in a standing posture, with the loins girt about,

* Genesis i. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus xviii. 32

† Deuteronomy xvi. 2; 2 Chronicles xxxv. 10, 11.

with sandals on the feet, staves in the hands, and all the preparations of an immediate journey. The lamb was to be entirely eaten up, so that none should be left till morning; and a direction was given that 'not a bone should be broken;*' which injunction was, because the haste which attended the first observance would not admit of the delay of jointing and dissevering.

A variety of ceremonies attended the rite; but it is not essential to my subject to give a particular account of them. I may only add, the morning, which followed, ushered in the great day in honor of national emancipation and freedom.

II. As Jesus had lately conversed with Moses and Elias, on the mount of transfiguration, respecting '*the exodus* which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,'† and which was to be effected at the time of the approaching *Passover*; we may well expect to find striking analogies of the one to the other in the closing scene of his life. The implication is, that as Moses led forth the Israelites from the bondage to which they were subjected in Egypt, and conducted them to the promised Canaan; so, *the Prophet whom God had raised up like unto Moses*,‡ should accomplish a far superior exodus, obtain for mankind a more glorious emancipation, and conduct them through the wilderness of an earthly sojourn to the heavenly world.

III. I now proceed to state the circumstances atten-

* Exodus xii. 46.

† It is to be regretted that our translators did not retain the original word, instead of rendering it 'decease.' And how strange to speak of *accomplishing* a decease!

‡ Deuteronomy xviii. 18; Acts iii. 22.

dant on *the last supper* of our Lord,* and to cite the particular references in the evangelical history which were afterwards made to the Passover; in order to make it evident that THE NATIONAL FEAST was not celebrated until after the death of Christ.

Matthew makes this remark, 'Jesus said unto his disciples, ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.' This declaration gave them notice, that, on the arrival of the Passover, the concerted plot for his destruction would be accomplished. If this was spoken, as I suppose it was, on the day of the week answering to our Tuesday, the event referred to would take place on Friday.

The Evangelists, after giving an account of the supper at Bethany, and of the offer made by Judas to the Priests to deliver up Jesus to them, go on to state that, 'then came the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed.' That is, that the evening which began the Paschal day, or day of preparation for the feast, at the commencement of which the leaven was to be put away, and on the latter part of which the Paschal lamb was to be killed, had arrived. This, therefore, must have been at sunset on Thursday, whereat the thirteenth day of the month was concluded, and the fourteenth day began.† 'And then the disciples of Jesus came to him, saying, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?

* Compare Matthew xxvi. 1, 2, 14—30; Mark xiv. 1, 12—26; Luke xxii. 1, 7—18; with John xiii. 1—12; 23—30.

† Let it be kept in mind that a Jewish day was *Νυχθημερον*, *night-and-day*.

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep the Passover at thy house, with my disciples. And they did as Jesus appointed them; and were shown a large upper room, furnished and prepared; and there they made ready the Passover.* This *making ready*, or *preparing*, consisted, principally, in bespeaking the unleavened bread that would be wanted, and engaging that it should be furnished them daily through the paschal week; in procuring the wine; and in ascertaining where they could get the bitter herbs. It could not include the selecting and purchasing the lamb and having it killed; for the time did not admit of that; besides, the solemn act, which was sacrificial,* must be done by an officiating Priest in the Court of the Temple.† It was not lawful to anticipate the act of killing; nor to do it in any other place; nor to have it done but by the Priest. It was a public, not a private, transaction. It is not at all likely, therefore, that Peter and John could have had a lamb killed at an

* *Εδαι θυεσθαι το πασχα*, Luke xxii. 7; compare Mark xiv. 12; 1 Corinthians v. 7.

† Josephus says, 'These High Priests, at the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour till the eleventh; but so that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice; for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves, and many of us are twenty in company.'—*Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 9.*

Maimonides declares, 'The Paschal victim, like other victims, was slain nowhere but in the hall of the Temple. It was forbidden to slay the Paschal victim upon a private altar.'—*De Sacrificio Paschali*, lib. c. § 3.

unseasonable hour, though it were on the proper day.

The minor, contingent preparation, was for the Supper that would soon be needed for their Master and their fellow disciples.

'Now when evening was come, Jesus, having arrived, sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.' As, however, one service had been omitted, 'Jesus rose from supper, laid aside his outer loose garment, took a towel and girded himself, and then poured water into a bason, and began to wash the feet of the disciples.'

It may be well to remark that *the Jews did not sit at table, as we do, but used the recumbent posture at their domestic meals, their social entertainments, and their festive banquets; BUT NOT AT THE PASCHAL FEAST.** And this brings me to the point which I began this discussion to prove, namely, that the repast now eaten by Jesus and his Disciples was a *Common Supper*, except that it was eaten with unleavened bread; and that it was *previous to the Paschal feast*.

The Jews stood round the table at the Passover, and (as has been already observed,) ate the lamb in the habit and attitude of persons about to set out on a journey. As there were neither of these concomitants of the National Festival on this occasion, and no mention of a roasted lamb, or of bitter herbs, we may reasonably infer that this could not be the Paschal feast. Besides, in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of John, it is expressly declared, that this transaction of washing the feet was 'before the feast of the Passover.'

* See pages 3 and 4. The repast &c.

ver.' Indeed, the very doing of this act shows that this was not the Passover, for at that feast no such service was needed, neither could it be performed, *for the participants were all standing, with their sandals on.* Moreover, certain ceremonies were to be performed at the national festival, of which there is not the least indication at the repast partaken by our Lord and his twelve immediate followers. So that it has nothing in common with the Passover, which is invariably designated as a *FEAST*, and, though partaken in the evening, is never called a *Supper*. At its first institution was this injunction, 'Ye shall keep it as a *FEAST* forever.'^{*}

During the supper, the treachery of one of the twelve was intimated; and the allusion to the individual which accompanied the giving of a bit of bread† to Judas, made him apprehend that his baseness was about to be exposed, he rose, unceremoniously, from the table, and went out. The others, not suspecting the motive, imagined that 'because he had the bag, Jesus had said unto him, Buy that of which there is need against the feast ;'‡ which must have intended, more especially, the *lamb*, for other articles had been bespoken and engaged by Peter and John on their errand of preparation; but the lamb was to be selected, and purchased, and set apart awhile, before it was slain. The very fact that there was something to be

^{*} Exodus xii. 14, 24, 33; xiii. 10. Compare Leviticus xxiii. 29, 41; Ezekiel xlv. 21; Matthew xxvii. 15; Mark xv. 6; Luke xxiii. 17; John vi. 4; vii. 8, 10, 11, 14, 37; 1 Corinthians v. 8.

† The word *ῥάπιστρον*, rendered 'sop' in our translation, means *a morsel, a bit, of bread*.

‡ John xiii. 29.

procured for the feast, incontrovertibly proves that *they were not then partaking the feast.*

What Luke mentions, xxii. 15, that Jesus said, 'With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I die,'* could not relate to the *Supper* then before them, but to the *Feast* not yet partaken. The words may bear this rendering, 'I earnestly desired to eat the Paschal lamb with you at this returning anniversary of the Feast; but I shall not eat of *him*† any more,‡ until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God;' that is, until the deliverance of mankind from 'the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,' a deliverance greater than that of the Israelites from the bondage in Egypt, to keep up the remembrance of which the Passover was instituted.' He, therefore, went on to institute an ordinance to be observed by his followers in all time to come, which should bear the import of a spiritual deliverance, the commemoration of which should supersede that of the Passover.

IV. This last supper of our Lord was eaten in the evening with which the fourteenth day of the month began; and which was strictly 'the day of preparation,' the day which *preceded* that of the observance of the Feast; answering to our Friday, and consequently before the Jewish Sabbath.

* Επιθυμια επιθυμησα. 'With desire I have desired.' A Hebraism. Thus in Genesis xxi. 30, επιθυμια επιθυμησας, is rendered 'sore longeth after.'

† The pronoun is masculine, and must refer to 'lamb' as its antecedent.

‡ Ουκετι, *no more*. Compare Matthew xxvii. 46; Mark ix. 8; x. 8; xv. 5.

Accordingly, we read in John xviii, 28, that 'the Jews went not into the judgement-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.' This precaution shows that the feast had not been celebrated. Moreover, on this same day, after the crucifixion, 'The Jews, *because it was the preparation*, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, for that Sabbath was a high day, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*' It was called 'a high day,' from the conjunction of the solemn convocation held on the day after eating the paschal lamb, with the Sabbath.

It is very observable that the crucifixion was on the fifth day of the week, answering to our Friday, soon after the sixth hour, that is, our twelve at noon; and Jesus expired soon after the ninth hour, answering to our three in the afternoon, and *precisely at the time when the Paschal lamb was slain, and the blood sprinkled on the altar*. Thus he who was the true Paschal lamb, as the Apostle speaks,† most exactly answered the type, as in this particular, so *in the very time of its oblation*.

Joseph of Arimathea, having begged of Pilate the body of Jesus for interment, 'took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein man was never before laid; *and that day was the preparation*, and the Sabbath drew on.‡' Of course it was so soon after the crucifixion, that the evening had not commenced.

* John xix. 31.

† 1 Corinthians v, 7.

‡ Luke xxiii, 54.

So it is said, Matthew xxvii, 62, 'The next day that followed the day of preparation, the Chief Priests and Pharisees came together, &c.' to take measures for securing the sepulchre. Hence, also, it is very certain that Christ died *on the day of preparation*, and, therefore, before the observance of the Paschal Feast.

I am aware that there is one objection, or rather cavil, opposed to this construction. It comes in the form of questioning, 'Why our Lord should send two of the disciples to make ready for a Passover that he was not himself to celebrate?' I reply, the proposition that they should do this originated with themselves, and was in consequence of the obligation which they felt to be prepared seasonably for the observance of the national feast. He might not deem it proper to say any thing that should prevent their doing so, though *he* might not have the opportunity of joining them in it, as he had earnestly desired to do. Nor do I see any reason to suppose that the eleven neglected the observance of the Passover. I imagine them to have gone, at a suitable time, to the Priest, and, taking the lamb slain for them, to return to the guest-chamber, have it roasted, and, at the usual hour of the evening, perform the indispensable duty of feasting on it. This was, indeed, not 'with the gladness of the nation,' but with saddened hearts, for their beloved Master was then laid in the tomb. And, finally, as the apartments had been engaged for the seven days of the Passover, they, undoubtedly, continued to resort to them; and this is what is meant in John xx. 10, by going 'to their own home.'

The foregoing remarks are corroborated by several

references to the crucifixion in other passages of the New Testament, which I shall quote as inferential illustrations. John xix. 32, 36. 'When the soldiers had broken the legs of the two that were crucified with Jesus, and came to him, they found that he was dead already, and broke not his legs.' Upon which the Evangelist remarks, that, 'thus the Scripture was fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken.' The passage, here referred to, is Exodus xii. 46, and Numbers ix. 12, where the words are spoken of *the Paschal lamb*.

With like reference and application, is the direction of Paul, 1 Corinthians v. 7, 8, 'Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'

In 1 Corinthians xv. 20, the Apostle Paul declares that 'Jesus rose from the dead, and *became the first fruits of them that slept*;' and it is observable that his resurrection actually took place 'on the morrow after the Sabbath,' when as is mentioned in Leviticus xxiii. 11, 'the sheaf of the first fruits was waved before the Lord.'

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Dorchester.

WHY DID THE JEWS REJECT JESUS?

The obstinate unbelief of the Jews, and their continued malice against him whom we confess as the true Messiah must have caused many inquiries to rise up in the mind of the Christian, which at times have been slightly tinged with doubts. That such a fact should be offered as an objection to Christianity by the unbeliever was certainly to have been expected. As infidelity is forced to cast about for its arguments, it was not to have been supposed that one so specious as this would have been neglected. Let us examine the subject with some attention, and we may perhaps find a friend where we expected an enemy; Christianity may found an argument, where ignorance has started an objection.

Let us in the first place set forth the objection in the strongest light.—The promise of a great Prophet and deliverer had for ages been made to the Jewish people. The time was come when that promise was about to be fulfilled. Pagan as well as Jewish historians bear witness to the general expectations. Those expectations were now satisfied as far as they ever would be. The promised prophet came. His mission was worthily attested to be from on high. The ordinary laws of nature were suspended at his will. No one who followed in his steps for a single day could either doubt that he claimed a higher than human power, or deny that he offered proofs of the justice of such a claim. He journeyed over the land of Judea where the sacred books which contained the promise

of his coming were circulated and honored. He spoke directly to his countrymen in their own language, and with all those forms and ornaments of speech in which their own lessons of wisdom were wont to be communicated. He admitted the divine origin of their religion, acknowledged the authority of the writings of Moses and their prophets, he revered and obeyed their national institutions, and was in every way fitted to instruct and convince. But still they did not accept him. 'He came unto his own and his own received him not.' His claims were denied, his lessons were derided, he was followed by insult and scorn, and at last was subjected to a most agonizing and ignominious death.

Such is the objection. Now how shall it be removed? In what manner can we account for the constant and general disbelief of those, who it would seem must have had every opportunity and means of conviction? There was the teacher before them. He acknowledged their right to claim from him the attestations of his alleged mission from God. 'Come and see'—was his ready permission of their scrutiny. If our records be true, he performed in their sight the most stupendous miracles. He opened his mouth in wisdom; he spake with authority, and as man never before spake; he did works which no man could do except God were with him. But those to whom he spoke were not convinced. Perhaps the very mouths which he had supplied by the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, uttered forth the cry, "crucify him, crucify him." How, it may be asked, can we believe upon the authority of written documents,

what the Jews could reject when the alleged occurrences were cognisable by their own senses.

The answer usually given to this objection seems to me abundantly sufficient to weaken its supposed weight, and if the nature of the case could permit of a more full and rigid statement of the causes which operated in the rejection of the Messiah, even the appearance of an objection founded upon it would vanish.

To exhibit clearly and with due force the reasons which would reconcile the real possession of miraculous powers by the Savior, with the stubbornness and infidelity of the Jews, we should be obliged to search deeply into the springs and motives of the human heart—to weigh the force of prejudice—to measure the power of excited passion, and to decide upon the wild limits to which impulse will bear forward a multitude of human beings when their pride or interest is at stake. Had Jesus come among the Jews, unexpected, preceded by no voice of prophecy, by no long cherished desires and expectations and by none of those various preconceived notions of his character and office, which would necessarily be built upon such expectations, then indeed the case would have been widely different. He would then at least have found patient hearers. Not even the Jewish law would in that case have condemned a man before it had heard him. Even if the eyes which looked upon him were clouded by ignorance, they would have looked attentively upon his mighty works, and though the ears which heard him had been deaf to the words of truth and soberness, they would not have permitted their tongues to construe his instructions as blasphemies. But Jesus came

upon the earth neither unprophecied nor unexpected. His mission was foretold, his character was prejudged. Far back in the primitive ages of the patriarchs, and beneath the palm trees and the tents of Canaan, the dying father had seen the day of a coming prophet mighty in word and in deed. Children's children imbibed the joyful hopes with the nursing-milk of their infancy, and ages rolled on accumulating the promises. Supposing that the knowledge of a coming prophet had been imparted to Moses alone, and that his words contained the only divinely authorised communication to the Jews upon the subject of so much interest, that alone was sufficient to invest the promise with an aid of sanctity and of pious trust. Moses was their revered father and lawgiver. His name was repeated with added reverence as time removed him back from their own days. It was when the hour of his death was at hand that he had uttered to the whole congregation of Israel those remarkable words. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.'* The hope thus excited was cherished with the most devout confidence. In no period of national degeneracy or of distant bondage did it desert them. Succeeding teachers, whether they were commissioned for that purpose by the Almighty, or not, still repeated the prediction, and made it the broad foundation of encouragement to the nation when depressed, and of warning when it was sunk in corruption. Here indeed we discern the origin of those prejudices which exist-

* Deuter. xviii. 15.

ed in such force, and were manifested with such a fearful virulence, when the Savior came. The national condition of the Jews was always very variable. Especially after the establishment of the monarchy, prosperity was at no period of long continuance. War, exile, slavery, and oppression, internal dissension, the demolition of the Temple—the suppression of their worship by Antiochus Epiphanes—these all succeeded each other, and were relieved only by partial restitution at the time of the Maccabees. Their independence again surrendered to Pompey, was never restored. The revolt of the ten tribes threatened the destruction of the nation, and the Babylonian Captivity might have whelmed it in idolatry. Once happily restored to the fields of Canaan, the conquests of Alexander again disturbed them, and though he left them unharmed, their subsequent situation as the subjects now of Syria and now of Egypt was far from being prosperous. Amidst all these scenes of adversity and of suffering, but one hope sustained the Jews, and that was to be realized in a coming deliverer. How touchingly beautiful are the sweet consolations with which the Jewish prophets encouraged the daughter of Zion to be of good cheer—for the Lord would yet comfort her—He would visit His people—He would redeem Jerusalem! Isaiah uttering forth his sublime visions with lips touched by a live coal from the altar, Jeremiah weeping over the ruins of the beloved city, and Daniel sealing the book of prophecy which he had received from the Ancient of days, spoke words of comfort to Jerusalem, and told her that when her warfare was accomplished, her iniquity should be par-

done. How natural then was it, that in such scenes the Jews should meditate upon the oracles till they had given to them the meaning of their own hopes and desires. They were in the midst of wars, and burned to ride over the necks of their oppressors. They looked upon the day of their redemption, as the day of universal conquest, when the morning trumpet upon Mount Moriah should be answered by the ascending prayers of all nations, kingdoms and languages, when the root of Jesse should send forth a king who should rule the whole earth, and when all people should assemble to the mountain of the Lord's house which should be established upon the tops of the mountains. How could it be otherwise then, than that he who was to effect all this for their nation—should be a mighty conqueror? Moses indeed had only promised them a Prophet. But a Prophet they did not want. They had them till the time of Malachi, but they did not obey them. It was victory which they longed for—extended conquest—full revenge over their enemies, and a proud name in the earth. Such were the hopes and expectations which waited upon the coming of the Messiah. It is remarkable that both Suetonius and Tacitus, who though Pagan historians, bore witness to the far spread opinion that a great deliverer was to come, have spoken of him as a conqueror. Philo, who was a Jewish writer, cotemporary with the Savior, in reference to the same expectations, uses this language: 'For as the oracle saith (Num. xxiv. 7,) a man shall go forth, and warring against great and populous nations, shall overcome them; God sending all suitable aid to the godly. This man shall extend his conquest

for the good of the conquered, so as to be the strength of the empire, and the head of the human race.' These words, in one sense, have been most remarkably fulfilled, but how differently from the spirit and the intention which uttered them.

Such were the hopes and the prospects of the whole Jewish people, when in the year 64 before Christ, Judea became a Roman province. New burdens and new indignities were imposed, but the same hope sustained them. So strong and exciting was the anxiety of the Jews for the day of their deliverance, that many impostors, as we learn from the book of Acts, and the works of Josephus, with nothing in their favor but the wishes of their countrymen, had risen up, and obtained many followers. But rumors of a more serious matter began to be heard—A man in the garb of the ancient prophets was baptizing upon the banks of the Jordan, and he had spoken of a mightier one than he who was to follow. Presently it is whispered abroad that a new prophet had risen up in Galilee, almost the last place in the world from which the Messiah would have been expected. The people leave their occupations and follow him to a hill where he prepares to address them. And now if he will but unfurl a standard, whoever he may be, if he will summon them to arms, and guide them with zeal to the battle, thousands will shout out in triumph, and go wherever he will lead them. But he has no weapon, nor does he call for theirs. The first words the new teacher utters, prove that he is not the one whom they expect—his definition of his subjects does not include them. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' he says,—for they are the members

of the new and expected kingdom. Throughout the whole of the Savior's ministry, whatever he could do, whatever he could say, would not weaken the shock of such a declaration as this. Never could the exordium of an oration, however grossly it might violate the principles of taste and of eloquence, have more effectually destroyed the impression of subsequent arguments and proofs, upon an audience, than did this first avowal of the Savior. One of their prophets* had previously told the Jews that when the Deliverer should come he would have neither form nor comeliness, and that when they should see him, he would have no beauty that they should desire him. But any poverty in outward appearance would have been but a small objection compared with the deep disappointment attending the first declaration of the Savior. This was enough to verify the words of the Prophet, that they should not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts. Our Savior saw the impression which his words had made, but he did not remove it. On the contrary, every day of his journeyings witnessed similar effects of his words. Mark the question of Zebedee's wife, desiring the places of honor for her sons in the imperial court of the new monarch, and the answer referring to that bitter cup which awaited him.† Observe likewise the desponding question of his own disciples, intimating that they had already waited long enough for the fulfillment of their wishes—'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'‡ It was in the

* Isaiah liii. 2.

† Matth. xx. 21, 22.

‡ Acts i. 6.

same spirit that he was so often watched when he was addressing the multitude, by those who wished to entrap him in his speech. One of the most artful of all the means which they employed was in relation to the tribute money. Judea as a Roman province, and as using the common Roman currency, stamped with the arms of the Emperor, was bound to the payment of a tribute, which was collected by the odious publicans. One of these coins was brought to Christ with the expectation that then if ever he would declare himself to be a higher king than Augustus. Again the Jews were referred to the equally unsatisfactory and unintelligible idea of a spiritual kingdom. And thus it was continually. Christ knew his work, and he alone realized the superiority of the purposes of his mission even above the most extravagant expectations of his countrymen. He was indeed to fulfil the law and the prophets, but it was by annulling the one and by surpassing the others. He labored constantly to impress upon his countrymen the true nature of religion, but they could conceive of it only as a matter of rites and forms. He rebuked with the plainest authority the insolent pretensions of the Pharisees, and as they had expected that the coming prophet would have courted their favor, it might well be supposed that their treatment of the alleged deceiver would not have been very friendly. The chief priests and rulers likewise beheld in the efforts of the new teacher an attempt rather to weaken their own authority, than that of their pagan enemies, and they therefore treated him with scorn. Such was the reception which Christ met with among the nobles of the land; what could it then

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have been among the common people, the very slaves of the rulers, but neglect and insult? Such in fact was the treatment which awaited Christ in every city and village. He might speak words of the truest wisdom, he might declare the loveliness of virtue, and utter the most fearful warnings against sin, but they all fell upon hearts of stone. The Jews had even understood Christ to have spoken against their temple, and this was treasured up in their minds to aggravate the indignities of the judgment hall.

We have already described the person whom the Jews expected as their national deliverer, and we can now compare the character of Christ with those expectations. He was born in an humble village, and had his cradle in a manger; he had no place of rest where he might lay his head, and at last he died upon a cross.

Now who that knows the history of his race even for a single century, who even that knows the passions which he may see every where at work around him, will ask,—Why did the Jews reject Jesus? If any one is so ignorant of every page of human records, and of the occurrences of every day, as to ask this question, we would recommend to him the study of human nature. The superiority of man's higher nature—of his intellectual and moral powers, has often been exemplified by his crimes and his excesses. Prejudice and passion have their workings within the spirit, and these were so powerful among the Jews, as even to conquer the evidence of their senses.

This then is the answer which is more than sufficient to the objection founded upon the rejection of Jesus

by his own countrymen. They looked for a far different personage than he was—they were blinded to their own best interest, and at the same time could not appreciate the lofty excellence of the Savior's character. They waited upon his steps, they asked him many questions, but those steps led them to the humble abodes of poverty, and his answers were full of disappointment and of condemnation. They therefore turned away from him—they loaded him with insult, denied his claims, and still cherished the hope of a coming deliverer whose sword should be victorious.

Still it will be objected, did not Jesus work miracles? how then could the Jews resist the evidence of their senses? I have already referred to a principle in human nature, the truth of which all history and experience attest, that man's higher powers, even when perverted, may exert a stronger influence upon him, than any thing which occurs in the outward world. Illustrations of this might be brought from every era of history, and from every walk of life. The rash courage of the soldier which bears him among the deadly weapons of his foes, the bodily mortification of the ascetic, the enthusiastic devotion of the scholar at the sacrifice of his health—these are among the most familiar illustrations of man's indifference to what is taking place around him, in order to gratify the ruling passion of his soul. Applying the operation of this same principle to the conduct of the Jews, and it would be sufficient to account for their absolute denial of all miraculous powers to the Savior, if the circumstances of the case required it, but they do not. The Jews did not deny to Christ miraculous powers or ac-

tions. This let it be ever remembered is one of the abortions of the reckless infidelity of a later age. In support of his pretensions before the Jews, Jesus could fearlessly appeal to his miracles. He cured the epileptics, and restored the maniac—i. e. in the popular language of that day he cast out devils,—and the Jews dared not deny it. Their answer was, ‘you indeed cast out devils, but it is by the assistance of Beelzebub—the very prince of devils.’ They did not think it necessary to give a further answer to the manifest inconsistency of their objection which Christ displayed to them. They either could not or would not account for the alleged contest of devil with devil, for surely if Beelzebub lent his assistance to expel his own emissaries, his kingdom was divided against itself. And Milton has told us that

‘ Devil with devil damn’d firm compact hold.’

It cannot be necessary at this day to prove that if Christ set aside the established order of things, he must have done so by permission of the Being who established that order. Still less need it be proved that as the miracles of Christ were all designed for beneficent purposes, they must have originated in a good Being. It is enough for us to know that the Jews allowed to Christ the possession of superhuman powers. We have their own authority that he performed miracles; the only question with them was, ‘when the real Messiah is come will he do *greater* works than those which this man doeth?’ The character of his miracles was not such as might be expected either to please or to satisfy the Jews. When Jesus was about to enter

upon the duties of his ministry, he retired into an uninhabited spot to prepare himself by meditation and prayer. Here we are told that one of the temptations which occurred to him was to spare himself the slow and painful process of convincing the Jews that he came from God, by works of benevolent power, and by throwing himself down unharmed from the highest pinnacle of the Temple among the astonished worshippers, to put his claims at once beyond dispute. But this was a presumptuous wish, opposed to the intentions of God, who had designed that the works—the works of love—which the Savior performed, should, by the infinite duration of their effects, be a witness to all coming time, that the Father had sent him. Thus his miracles were not works of power merely, as were those of Moses, and they were therefore not received as the expected sign from heaven. They were not denied, they were considered as unsatisfactory.

It may be observed likewise that the early opponents of Christianity, who committed their objections to writing, never denied that Christ did wonderful works. Celsus, who wrote about A. D. 176, says ‘that Jesus had learned the Egyptian arts, and valuing himself upon them, had set up himself for a God.’ He could find no better argument against Christianity than that the miraculous actions were performed by magic. Julian, A. D. 361 adopted the same shift, and gave to Jesus the following character, that he ‘healed lame and blind people, and exorcised demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany.’

Thus it appears that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews was by no means inconsistent with his own de-

claration that he performed many mighty works. And here I might leave the subject, convinced that whatever force might have appeared in the objection proposed, would vanish when it was fairly scrutinized. But I would ask the attention of the reader to a few remarks upon the question, How far did the Jews reject Christ? There are many hints to be gathered here and there in the New Testament writings which would go far to support the probability that the Jews may have been almost persuaded of the Divine Mission of Christ, though they brought about his death. The point which I would attempt to illustrate, is this, that the Jews were in doubt upon the claims of Christ Jesus to be their Messiah, and that they determined to satisfy themselves by putting him in such a situation as must set the question at rest. If he could be put to death by their hands, then it would be plain to them that he was not the Christ, but if he was superior to the multitude whom his words had so excited, his speedy deliverance would declare it. Now mark the words with which Nicodemus opened his errand to Christ. He had chosen the darkness of the night for his visit, and yet he was one of the rulers of the Jews; circumstances which show that the words of the new teacher had excited some attention, while at the same time, they imply the doubt and suspicion which rested upon him. Nicodemus, like the rest of his countrymen looked for the coming deliverer as a King and a Conqueror, and therefore was not prepared to admit that Jesus was he. He knew that he was a Teacher sent from God, because, as he said, no man could have done such works if God were not with him. And this

seems to have been the state of his mind throughout all the transactions of the Savior's history. He could not but discern the finger of God, and yet he marvelled at the declaration of Jesus that even the rulers of the Jews must undergo a change before they could become members of the new kingdom.

It was the same partial conviction which led the Jews generally to ask of Jesus a plain statement of his character and thus to satisfy their doubts. 'If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' As it regards the motive which Judas had in view in betraying his Master, there is a difference of opinion. The common view of the matter is that he looked to the reward of innocent blood—to the thirty pieces of silver. This however must appear to many to be a very unsatisfactory motive. The sum of money was not equal to twenty dollars, and as Judas 'carried the bag' which contained the common stock of the little band he might at any time have absconded and thus have secured at least an equal sum, without being guilty of so base an act as the betrayal of his Master. I do not deny that the money might have operated as an inducement, but I cannot think it a sufficient motive. Judas, in common with all the other disciples, could not, or would not believe, notwithstanding the oft repeated warnings of Jesus, that he whom they thought to be the Messiah, was about to suffer an ignominious death. On the contrary, they were anxiously waiting for the time, when he should announce himself as the long expected Redeemer. They were all ready to exclaim with Peter, when the mournful presentiment of coming sorrow fell from the Savior's lips—'Be it far from thee,

Lord.' And we see that when the multitude armed with swords and staves, came out to take Jesus, Peter drew his sword and used it with the greatest confidence, nothing loth to second the words in which he expected to hear Jesus proclaim his title.

The most probable account of the matter is, that Judas being impatient to declare his Master, and of Christ's delay to announce himself, and reflecting that this public opportunity would not occur again for a year, (i. e. till the next Passover) determined to place him in a situation which would *force* him to proclaim his Messiah-ship, unfurl his standard, and rally the people. 'And even if he should be crucified, (we may suppose Judas to have reasoned with himself) still it will be only as he himself has declared all along, that it must be. And if it must be, I may as well be the instrument of his death, especially as it will be for my pecuniary advantage. I may incur his immediate displeasure by it, but still I shall bring on that crisis, which I know on the whole will be the best both for him and for me.' We know the terrible result of the disappointment of Judas. It may be thought that this explanation does away much of the baseness usually attributed to him; yet it still makes him a deluded wretch, guilty of base disobedience and of gross presumption.

The conduct of Pilate also, justifies the assertion that the claims of Jesus were not wholly despised. It is plain that he was unwilling to incur the guilt of his condemnation. He found no cause of death in him, and was evidently struck by the sublime answer of Jesus to his question—whether he was a king?—'Yes

I am—a King—the King of Truth.' Pilate did all that he could to satisfy the Jews. He scourged Jesus and permitted him to be arrayed in the emblems of mock royalty, and nothing but the intimation of the Jews, that they would report of him to the Roman Emperor as having favored the pretensions of another king, would have made him yield against his better judgment. Gamaliel likewise in the Sanhedrim appears to have been desirous of delay, lest they might haply incur the displeasure of God. He could not be blinded to the wonderful works which Christ had performed, nor look unmoved upon his innocent countenance as he calmly received his unjust sentence, and the railings and insults which accompanied it. When Jesus at last hung upon the cross, there was something more than derision conveyed in the words of the Jews—'Let us see if he will save himself.' If Elias, whom they supposed him to have called upon, had come to his deliverance, his appearance would not have been a sudden shock to all who then stood upon Mount Calvary. Many indeed may have had their doubts unfavorably settled, when they saw that he whom they confessed had saved others, could not rescue himself, but some whose hearts were open to other evidence, must have exclaimed with the Roman centurion, 'Truly this was the Son of a God.' Something there was also in the extraordinary care which the rulers took to secure the sepulchre. If there had been no doubt in their minds that Jesus was really an impostor, why did they not leave him when dead and think no more of him? The guarding of the tomb was an idle subterfuge on their part to conceal their doubts. They pretended

that the disciples would steal the body; but the disciples were almost as much in doubt as themselves, and they had besides had the body in their possession once; what possible advantage would it have been to them to produce the corpse? The truth is, the rulers were very anxious for the result.

Observe likewise the hesitation of the disciples on the walk to Emmaus after the resurrection. They had only hoped that the Redeemer had indeed come, but when their beloved Master had expired, that hope had expired with him.

These are some among the numerous illustrations which I might produce, to show the reasonableness of my assertion, that the crucifixion of Jesus, was as much a bold hazard to decide the doubts of the Jews, as a formal declaration of their unbelief. If this view be true, then the facts of the case are very different from what has been assumed in the objections of the infidel. Instead of a positive and unqualified denial of all miraculous powers to Jesus, after his claims had been calmly examined by the Jews,—we have a result far different—Jesus at his coming was met by a load of the most powerful and unhappy prejudices, his real character was not appreciated, his superhuman powers were allowed, but it was to aggravate the enmity of the Jews, as they ascribed them to an unholy source, and finally his death was not an expression of their conviction against him, but a desperate test of their doubts.

I have been more anxious to account for the indifference with which the beautiful lessons of the Savior were met by the Jews, than for the malice which subjected him to an ignominious death. The latter may

find a sufficient cause in the awful excesses of momentary passion, the former must be traced to the deep workings of prejudice, and to the blinding influence of mistaken interest and fondly cherished desire.

It was indeed no new fate which Jesus encountered as a religious teacher. The Prophets of old had suffered imprisonment, tortures and death, at the hands of those whom they were sent to teach, and all history will bear us witness that there never was an improvement introduced either in religion or politics or science, which did not subject its authors to the necessity of attesting it by the sacrifice of their bodies, as well as by the labors of their minds. We need not go back to Socrates and Aristides, or even to Copernicus and Galileo to prove the fact. We see the workings of the same principle every where around us now. Just in proportion to the good to be communicated, and the strength of the prejudices to be eradicated, is the opposition which is sure to present itself. There are those even at the present day who would be anxious to read the sincerity or the hypocrisy of any reformer in the calmness or the convulsions of his countenance while under the tortures of the stake, or the sharp agonies of the cross.

In exhibiting the motives which led the Jews to reject and to crucify the Messiah, I have wished to display that conformity to truth and nature which is so manifest in the Evangelical relations. The naturalness of the transactions there recorded, and their perfect agreement with all that we know of the state of the times when they occurred and with the universal character of mankind in their prejudices and passions,

is the highest proof of their reality. We do very wrong to weaken the force of this evidence, by ascribing a mysterious character to the necessity, the means or the consequences of the Savior's death; for this is indeed the sure foundation upon which we rest our most sincere belief, and our surest hopes.

We should do wrong to leave our subject without reflecting upon its moral bearings. Amidst all the fierce contests of mankind, and the awful excesses of human passion, in which the wrath of man has been made to contribute to the praise of God, the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus have likewise their redeeming value. If his claims had been at once admitted, if prejudice had not misconceived, nor passion opposed, if speedy and universal obedience had waited upon his words, the captious objector would raise the cry of collision. He would say that the words of prophecy had found their fulfillment only in the cunning devices of men, that all had been so ready to receive the new doctrine, as to leave none to sound its authority, and that the Jews had willingly lent their aid to the propagation of a story so flattering to their nation. The enmity of the Jews has taken so powerful a weapon as this would have been from the hands of the unbeliever, and leaves him to find his objections, if he can, in the words and actions of those who preceded him in the rejection of Christ.

Above all, the injurious treatment to which Christ was subjected, constrained him to exhibit in the strongest light the true and spiritual nature of his religion. If human virtues are perfected by tears and trials, truly may the Savior have found satisfaction in

the travail of his soul. Had it not been for the insults of the judgement hall, the meekness which the Savior taught upon the Mount would have wanted one of its most beautiful illustrations in his life. Thus the bad passions of men are made to exhibit the loveliness of virtue, as the drop of water exhaled from the impure and stagnant pool may fall again in the fertile shower, and perchance if caught in the open shell may be transformed into a pearl. Thus the malice of the Jews in the rejection of the Savior, has been the means of bearing down to our time the most precious evidence of his excellence. The word of prophecy cannot be surer, the evidence of a miracle cannot be more satisfactory, than is the glory which gilds the humiliation of the Son of God.

GEO. E. ELLIS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

It is often complained of the Epistles of the New Testament, that they are difficult to be understood. Those of St. Paul are particularly so, since even an apostle declared they contained 'divers matters hard to be understood.' The principal cause of the obscurity of this portion of sacred writ, is the imperfection of our knowledge of the circumstances under which they were written. These Epistles are not different from those of other men in this respect. Who can understand Washington's letters, for example, without a knowledge of the circumstances under which they were written, and of the various events they relate to?

If this difficulty attaches to letters comparatively modern, how much more powerfully must it be felt in such as were written nearly two thousand years ago, in a foreign language, and in the midst of a people whose customs and manner of life, and habits of thinking were so widely different from ours.

St. Paul did not write with 'excellency of speech' as he himself assures us, and this very unstudiedness of their style is an impediment in the way of our understanding them, while it may have enhanced his merit in the eyes of the men he wrote to.

To remove some of these difficulties is the object of this article, and of others which may follow it relating to the succeeding Epistles.

Let us then inquire into

I. *The circumstances under which the first Epistle to the Thessalonians was written.*

Thessalonica was anciently called *Thermae* and is at present named *Salonichi*. In the time of Paul it was the capital of Macedonia, and a city of no inconsiderable importance. Many Jews were settled in the city at that time, as it appears from the manner in which Luke speaks of their synagogue, (Acts xviii. 1) and from the formidable opposition to Paul. Indeed at the present time *Salonichi* contains many Jewish families.

Paul in his second apostolical journey passed through Syria and Cilicia, to Derbe, and Lystra, where he was joined by Timothy, (Acts xvi. 1,) a young disciple, whose father was a Greek though his mother was a Jewess. From thence they passed through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, and came to Troas.

While they were in this city, Paul saw a vision : a man appeared to him and said, ' come over to Macedonia, and help us.' (Acts xvi. 9). He immediately set sail in company with Timothy and Silas, or Sylvanus, as he is sometimes called.

He remained sometime at Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and converted many of the people of the place. But afterwards, Paul and his companions were thrown into prison, from which they were however miraculously released. Then they came to Thessalonica, passing through Amphipolis, and Apollonia. (Acts xvi. 12—40.) It seems to have been Paul's custom to address his own countrymen before the Gentiles. So he went into the synagogue and preached to them for three sabbath days.

Some of the Jews was converted and many of the ' devout Greeks,' probably Gentiles who had become converts to the worship of the one God, but who had not submitted to the rites of the Jewish religion.* The remaining Jews, offended at Paul's success, gathered a mob of the dross of the people, and assaulted the house of Jason, where they expected to find the apostles. But disappointed in this, they seized Jason and some other Christians, and dragged them to the Forum, accusing them of treason against Cæsar, and alleging that they had protected a man who declared there was another King, ' Jesus.' But the magistrates, not finding sufficient evidence to commit them, took security ' of Jason and the other, and let them go.'

The Christians, apprehending farther difficulty, sent

* Michaelis chap. xii. §. 1.

away Paul and Silas at night, leaving their work of establishing Christianity still unfinished. They took the road to Berea, where they at first met with a favorable reception. (Acts xviii. 2—12.) Paul might well fear lest the furious host of the Thessalonian Jews should uproot the 'word' he had so imperfectly planted. So he seems to have resolved, when at Berea, to return and complete his work. 1 Thess. ii. 17—18, 'For we brethren being taken from you, for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again. 'But Satan hindered.' For the exasperated Jews pursued him even to Berea, and he was again obliged to fly, though he left Silas and Timothy to complete his work. They were less dreaded by the Jews than Paul, whose great learning and varied talents rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to them.

Paul went to Athens, and sent for Timothy and Silas to come to him. The former he sent back to the Thessalonians 'to know their faith,' and to afford them the comfort they needed in this affliction, and probably to establish them more completely in the Christian faith. (1 Thess. iii. 5, 6.) While Timothy was engaged upon this expedition, Paul went to Athens, and was afterwards joined by Timothy, who brought good news of the Thessalonian converts. Paul then wrote the first Epistle, both Timothy and Silas joining in the salutation.

There is a subscription appended to this epistle, stating it was written at Athens, but this clause rests upon no good authority, and accordingly has been re-

jected from the text by the best editors of the Greek Testament.

It is generally agreed among modern commentators that this is the earliest of Paul's Epistles which have come down to us. But Michaelis supposes it written after the Epistle to the Galatians. There is however considerable disagreement as to the precise year on which it was written. Michaelis places it about 51, Eichorn about 54, while Lardner and most other critics have fixed upon 52, as the most probable date. But the time is of but trifling importance. We can seldom fix the date of an Epistle upon ground that is incontestable.

II. *The contents of the Epistle.*

The Epistle may be divided into four parts.

1. The introduction, i. 1—4.

In this Paul expresses to the Thessalonians, his gratitude to God for the success of his labors among them, assuring them of his pleasant recollection of their faith, active love, and patient hope. The information which Timothy had brought was the immediate cause of the Epistle. The introduction is well adapted to keep alive their zeal.

i. 4, 'Knowing * * your election of God.'

This verse would be better understood thus : 'knowing brethren beloved by God, your choice, i. e., your discipleship, your choice of the christian religion. This is the reading of the 'old Syriac version,' the most ancient translation of the New Testament.

2. Paul argues for the divine origin of the Christian religion.

1. The apostle appeals to the power with which he

had preached among them, and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit which had accompanied his labors. From this and other circumstances it is probable, that miracles were performed in this, as in other cities, where he proved the divinity of his mission by healing the sick, and conferring miraculous powers upon some of the converts.

His argument is this, the superhuman powers of the teacher prove the divinity of the doctrine. i. 5—10.

2. He brings an argument from the character of the preachers of Christianity.

They were not discouraged even when shamefully treated. Compare 1 Thess. ii. 2 with Acts xvi. 19—25. They sought the glory of God and not of men, and subjected themselves to great hardships lest they should become burdensome to their brethren. Paul then speaks of his continued affection for them. 'For ye are our glory and joy.' He had shown his interest in their behalf by his desire to return, and by sending Timothy to comfort them. He reminds them of his joy at Timothy's glad tidings.

From this defence, we may infer that the Jews had attempted to alienate the Thessalonian converts from Paul, by representing his flight as a proof of a want of interest in their welfare.

3. He reminds them that the doctrines he had taught were not *man's* but *God's*. He recapitulates some of the most important precepts, and dwells distinctly upon the resurrection, as a doctrine full of comfort and hope.

He informs them that no one knows *when* the end of the world shall come, and draws a practical lesson

from this fact, viz : that they should *watch and be sober* lest it come upon them unawares.

v. 8, he mentions the *hope* of salvation as the crown of the Christian armor, which gives him occasion to speak of the grounds of that hope, viz. 'that God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.' This verse should be understood as relating to all men, that God desires their salvation, and not their destruction, v. 11.

4. The conclusion, containing some practical remarks, v. 12—28.

12, and 13. These verses are addressed to the laymen, while the two next apply to their teachers.

16. *Rejoice evermore.* i. e. on all occasions: the true Christian finds abundant cause of rejoicing in all circumstances of life. Compare this with Rom. xii. 11 and 2 Cor. vi. 10.

17. *Pray without ceasing.* Do not omit the duty of prayer, at proper times. It does not mean, one is to *pray all the time*. A man is said in scripture to do that *continually* or *without ceasing*, which is done *regularly*. See an instance of this in 2 Sam. ix. 7 at the end of the verse. Also 2 Kings xxv. 29.

19. *Quench not the Spirit.* Do not conduct in such a manner as to lose the blessings of the Christian religion.

24. *Who also will do it.* This perhaps relates to the preceding verse, where Paul had expressed a desire that his friends might be sanctified and preserved blameless; he now says, 'God is faithful'—constant in his operations—and he will do it, will bring it about.

The two last chapters of this Epistle contain many practical remarks of the greatest value.

THEO. PARKER.

A DISCOURSE ON PROPHECY AS AN EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. BY CHARLES W. UPHAM, JUNIOR PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM, MASS. 8vo. pp. 72. SALEM. 1835.

This is one of a series of discourses on the Evidences of Christianity delivered by the clergymen of Salem at the request of the young men of that town. I am acquainted with no work where the subject is discussed in so interesting a manner and at the same time with so much sound and discriminating scholarship as in this discourse. The subject is one which from its intrinsic difficulties and the fanciful views of many who have discussed it, has been rendered very uninteresting. Most of the treatises upon it which lie within the reach of the English reader, are either absurd or unnecessarily prolix, or very unsatisfactory in their arguments and illustrations. Even the six discourses of Sherlock want that vigorous and candid air which is observable in his other writings. Keith's treatise is in many respects valuable, but it attempts to prove too much. Hurd's Warburton Lectures, Belsham's Evidences, Alix's Reflections, Clarke's Evidences &c., Newton on the Prophecies, are all works of great merit, but they will hardly satisfy the reader.

Mr Upham has published the results of his thought and study in a form which brings them within the comprehension of all, and imparts to the subject an exciting interest. His reasoning is lucid and powerful, and if any differ from him in his conclusions, they will find it necessary to do more than dispute them. The discourse is divided into eight sections. The following sketch, though it does not do justice to the argument, may afford some idea of it.

Section first is introductory, containing some very forcible remarks upon the true foundation of a Christian faith, as requiring individual investigation, and resting only upon enlightened conviction. It gives likewise the true requisitions, of discipleship, and shows the uses of free discussion and criticism.

The second section is upon the interpretation of prophetic language. It contains a statement of the objections generally offered, and of the considerations by which they are removed. The author adopts a modified form of the theory of a double sense, founded generally upon the metaphorical character of all language, and the phenomena of association, and particularly upon the forms and objects of prophetic vision.

The conclusion which is attained by a course of acute and vigorous reasoning, is, that though we grant there is much in the language usually considered as prophetic of the Savior, which is not strictly applicable to his character and history, yet the general correspondence is so remarkable as fully to establish the authenticity and genuineness of the prophecy.

The third section contains a statement of the argument. This is founded upon the universal expectation

of an entire nation of the coming of the Messiah. To support this it is necessary to prove the antiquity of the Jewish Scriptures in which it is recorded. It will be enough if they can be shown to have existed at a certain period, whether they are inspired or not. In the fourth section, historical evidence is vindicated against the skepticism of those who make personal experience the only foundation of belief. The author's conclusion here is, that 'it is not the *species* of evidence that constitutes its strength, but the *character* and *degree* of it.' 'Historical testimony is frequently actually better than the evidence of the senses.'

The fifth section establishes the authenticity of the Scriptures. This is done by a very clear and interesting process. The author traces the Scriptures by retrogradation to the time of the council of Nice, and there fixes their existence in their present form at the commencement of the 4th century, by proving the truth of our ecclesiastical records by their conformity with the books found by some Portuguese navigators of the fifteenth century among some Christians in India who having left Europe soon after the council, had dwelt here in seclusion for twelve centuries. The Scriptures being thus proved to have existed in their present form in the year 315, time being allowed for their collection and propagation will bring their composition to the era ascribed to them.

In a similar manner the Old Testament Scriptures are traced to their origin in antiquity, by their translation into Greek at Alexandria 300 years before Christ, next at the Babylonian Captivity 590 B. C., again at the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, near-

ly 1000 B. C., and finally to the adoption of the regal government 400 years after Moses. It being thus shown that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were written many centuries before Christ, all that is necessary to the argument is, to prove that the universal expectation previously referred to was founded upon their prophetical declarations. This is stated in section sixth, and proved by Jewish and Heathen testimonies. Section seventh contains the result and application of the argument, and a striking reference to the prophecies of the Savior.

Section eighth concludes with a beautiful exhortation to the young men to whom the discourse was addressed.

I am aware that this sketch does not do justice to Mr Upham's treatment of his subject, but have endeavored to guard against a misrepresentation of it. It has met with a highly favorable reception, and will be much valued by all inquirers. GEO. E. ELLIS.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW XVII. 14—27.

Cure of the Lunatic.—Payment of the Tribute.

- 14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came up to him a man who kneeled to him, and
15 said: Sir, have compassion on my son, for he is lu-

natic and much diseased. For oftentimes he falls
16 into the fire, and often into the water. And I
brought him to thy disciples, but they could not heal
17 him. Then Jesus answered and said; O perverse
and unbelieving race! how long shall I be with you;
18 how long shall I bear with you! Bring him hither
to me. And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon
came out from him; and the boy was cured at that
19 hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus in private,
and said: Why were we not able to cast him out?
20 And Jesus said to them: Because of your want of
faith. For verily I say to you, if you have faith as
a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this moun-
tain, 'Be thou removed hence,' and it shall be remov-
21 ed and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this
kind goes not out except by prayer and fasting.
22 And as they were going about in Galilee, Jesus
said to them, The Son of Man is to be delivered into
23 the hands of men; and they will kill him; and on
the third day he will be raised. And they were
much grieved.
24 And when they were come to Capernaum, those
who received the tribute-money came to Peter and
said: Does not your Master pay the tribute? He
25 says, Yes. And when he had entered into the
house, Jesus anticipated him, saying: What think-
est thou, Simon? From whom do the kings of the

earth receive tribute or taxes; from their children,
 26 or from strangers? Peter says to him, From strangers. Jesus says to him, Then are the children
 27 free. Yet lest we should offend them, go to the sea-shore, cast in the hook, and take the fish that first comes up; and open his mouth and thou shalt find a stater; this take, and give to them for me and thee.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The cure of the lunatic is narrated by Mark (ix. 14—29) and by Luke (ix. 37—43.)

V. 14. *And when they were come to the multitude.* Luke says more particularly, that it was “on the next day” after the Transfiguration.

V. 15. *For he is lunatic &c.* “It was very usual to the Jews to attribute some of the more grievous diseases to evil spirits, especially those, wherein either the body was distorted, or the mind disturbed and tossed with a frenzy. From this vulgar opinion of the nation, one evangelist [Matthew] brings in the father of this child saying, ‘He is lunatic’—another [Mark] ‘He hath a dumb spirit.’ He had been dumb and deaf from his birth; to that misery was added a frenzy.” *Lightfoot.*—The question concerning demoniacal possession is amply discussed in the 2d vol. of the Script. Interp.

V. 17. *O perverse and unbelieving race!* These words seem to have been addressed to the distrusting disciples as well as to the Scribes (compare Mark ix. 14) and the people.

How long shall I be with you before you will believe that I am the Messiah?

How long shall I bear with you? This does not express impatience on the part of Jesus, but only regret, mingled with a reproof of their obstinacy and hardness of heart.

V. 18. *And Jesus rebuked him.* Mark and Luke say he rebuked the "unclean spirit"—i. e. he used the popular language of the time, and addressed the boy as though he supposed some demon to be dwelling in him.

V. 19. The apostles might well be surprised. For we find from Matth. x. 1, that they had received power to cure this kind of disorder, and from Luke x. 17, we learn that even the seventy had exercised this power.

V. 20. *Want of faith.* Perhaps *trust* would better express the sense than 'faith.' It was not a disbelief in Jesus as the Messiah, that the disciples were here guilty of. They seem rather to have lost their confidence, for the time, in that supernatural power which Jesus had granted them; and for this they were deservedly reprov'd. It may be that the peculiar aggravation of the disease in the present case took away their confidence in the supernatural power which should overcome it.

Faith as a grain of mustard seed—i. e. even a very small degree of faith. Some suppose it refers to a growing and expansive faith, as in Matthew xiii. 31, 32, the kingdom of heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed. But the former explanation seems most probable, as it was usual for the Orientals to use this comparison, when they would speak of any thing extremely small. See e. g. the 31st chapter of the Koran.

You shall say to this mountain &c. Evidently a proverbial expression, as Lightfoot has shown by quotations from the Rabbins. "The Jews," he says, "used to set out those teachers among them that were more eminent for the profoundness of their learning, or the splendor of their virtues, by such expressions as this. 'He is a rooter up (or a remover) of mountains.' 'Ben Azzai taught profoundly in the streets of Tiberias; nor was there in his days such another rooter up of mountains as he.' The same expression with which they extolled the learning and virtue of their men, Christ deservedly useth to set forth the power of faith."—In Luke xvii. 6, we find the metaphor varied; the sycamore tree instead of the mountain, illustrating the ob-

stacles which faith was to overcome. St. Paul (in 1 Cor. xiii. 2) makes allusion to this power of faith.

V. 21. *But this kind goes not out &c.* This is thought by Wakefield to be one of the most difficult passages of the New Testament. Some have supposed the meaning to be: "This unbelief of yours cannot be removed except by prayer and fasting." But the more usual explanation seems to me preferable, viz: "This kind of demons (literally)—i. e. a disorder of this aggravated kind is not removed" &c. Christ had before mentioned faith as necessary to work miracles. He now adds, that in these extreme cases, where faith is more especially tried, it was necessary to confirm their faith by the preparation of fasting and prayer.

Vs. 22, 23. Nothing is said in the context to connect these words with the preceding, or to show on what occasion they were spoken. But it may well be, that Jesus took frequent occasion to remind the disciples of his approaching death, lest his predictions should fall from their memories in after time—a thing not unlikely to happen (as they confessedly did not understand his meaning), unless it had been often repeated to them.

V. 24. *The tribute-money.* The original Greek expresses the sum which was paid for tribute—viz: the didrachma (about 25 cents of our money.) Most interpreters suppose this to have been, not a tribute paid to the Romans, but a contribution for the services of the temple, which was not indeed required by the Law, but had become customary since the Babylonian Captivity.

Does not your master pay the tribute? Jesus and his disciples had now been absent for some time from Capernaum, which was considered as 'his own city,' and consequently as the place where (if anywhere) he would pay the accustomed tax. During his absence it is probable the time of payment had come round. Upon his return therefore, the tax-gatherers immediately inquire of Peter (as being an inhabitant of Capernaum) whether his master was ready to pay this voluntary, but accustomed offering.

V. 25. *Jesus anticipated him.* i. e. spoke first. From this it appears that Peter was about to put some question to

Jesus; perhaps because he doubted whether Christ would assent to the demand of the tax-gatherers, perhaps because he was not provided with the money.

Vs. 25, 26. Our Savior argues in this question to Simon, that he, as the Son of God, should not be required to contribute to the expenses of his Father's temple. But as Hess well remarks, he does not here reprove the Jews, that they did not perceive his connexion with the Deity; he only shows the impropriety of the demand, by reasons which were very clear to the disciples, especially to Peter, who was already more acquainted than the rest with the divine dignity of his Teacher, and had lately been witness of it upon the Mount.

V. 27. *Stater*, a coin equivalent to two didrachms.

An objection has been made to this miracle, that it appears to have no suitable object. Why was it necessary that Jesus should have recourse to miraculous power on any occasion so comparatively trifling? Could not so small a sum have been provided at less expense? The answer of Hess is sufficient. 'To the disciple [Peter] it was very appropriate and instructive, that Jesus caused him to procure the money by means of his former calling, yet in such a way that he could plainly see himself indebted more to the omniscience* of his teacher, than to his own exertion. What had already been proved to him on another occasion and in a similar manner, he must also learn from this circumstance viz: that he might always firmly rely on the forethought of his Lord; which should easily help him out of all those troubles that he might fall into by having forsaken his former occupation, and changed it for more weighty employments.'

WM. SILSBEE.


* To this opinion I cannot assent. The simple fact that Jesus foreknew what should be in the fish's mouth, does not seem to me by any means to prove his Omniscience. *Supernatural knowledge* I grant it implies.

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